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English and the "Multilingual Turn"

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ABSTRACT

What if concepts like "liquid society" and the "complexity of the planetary era" were taken into account in the description of multilingualism and other language phenomena?[1] There is a growing need for possible answers to questions like this but the available evidence is that the term "multilingualism" involves different implicit and explicit language policies, urging pressures and resistances especially in reference to the spread of English and its dominant relationships with other national languages. These are the starting points of this work which considers the social value of communication as the basis of multilingualism and of the evolution of language systems. Thus, the data presented will show English in the middle of the double "listening" of cultural mediation and the imperfect "magnifying" glass of translation, both enforced powers of the so-called "multilingual turn".

1. English for a multilingual world

The dynamic equivalence(s) between source and target text has always stirred long-standing discussions about the nature of translating. Since Nida, the balance between science and art of translating or, the tension between theory and practice, have asked for more consciousness of the importance of "contexts" in defining the translating competence. Hence, the "risky business" of translating as the one represented by Herman Aschmann, translator of the three versions of the New Testament in the Mexican Totonaco. According to Nida:

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[1] See Bocchi – Ceruti (2007) and Morin et al. (2004).

one of the most creative translators I have ever known is Herman Aschmann, a person of limited academic training, but one who became entranced by the cultural content and literary potential of Totonaco, an Indian language in Mexico. Instead of submitting one possible rendering of a biblical expression, he usually had half a dozen ways of representing the meaning of the Greek text. Not only did he produce an exceptional New Testament in Totonaco, but inspired local people to imitate his skill in discovering more and more meaningful ways of communicating a message into an entirely different language-culture (Nida 2001: 7).

Today, most translations imply sophisticated technologies; however, they still deal with a lot of culture-bound elements, and build an intimate relationship between texts and environments (socio-cultural and lexical ones of course); but it is in these "spaces between" that the history of a country begins with its traditions, with its culture(s), with its language. In these spaces the journey of a language starts and in these blurred edges translators need a little bit of "strabismus", as Doyle suggests:

The notions of strabismus and enterprise lead, respectively, toward a consideration of two heuristic devices which may assist in achieving a better understanding of some of the complexity involved in and flexibility required for felicitous translation. The duality characteristic of a strabismus points toward the importance of binary relationships and /or oppositions; the notion of enterprise points toward a cline representing the choices made and the risks taken by the translator while working from one language toward and into another. […] The sine qua non of translation, the moral operative heart of the enterprise, is the notion of fidelity. […] Yet the translator's requisite strabismus – the eyes incessantly focusing on both the text-that-is and the text-to-be – makes adherence to fidelity no simple matter for, as Barbara Johnson has so aptly described it, the translator cannot help but be a "faithful bigamist" (Doyle 2008: 13-14).

The new map of contacts between different codes and communities overcomes the Romantic view of languages as unique mirrors of their cultures; on the contrary, both native speakers and language learners are pieces of a multi-faceted puzzle of an international socio-cognitive dimension as the one represented by multilingualism and its spread. After all, "multilingualism is the topic *du jour* – at least in critical applied linguistics" (May 2014: 1).

But there is a classifying mania provoked by what May calls "the turn towards multilingualism" (2014: 2). He says:

> The terminological proliferation notwithstanding the increasing focus on superdiverse linguistic contexts is welcome. It has usefully foregrounded multilingualism, rather than monolingualism, as the new norm of applied linguistic and sociolinguistic analysis. It has increasingly challenged bounded, unitary, and reified conceptions of languages and related notions of "native speaker" and "mother tongue", arguing instead for the more complex fluid understandings of "voice" (Makoni & Pennycook 2007, 2012), "languages as social practice" (Heller 2007), and a related "sociolinguistics of mobile resources" (May 2014: 1).

Commenting on the mainstream of the English language as a *lingua franca* does not offer the solution to the blurred edges of the language communication which, since Bloomfield, "arose from relatively practical preoccupations" (Bloomfield 1935: 21). Indeed, the resulting target of the multiracial society we live in, is a new idea of culture as a "practical preoccupation" from which the multilingual debate starts with the different communicative orientations of each people towards a transnational paradigm.

From this, new lines of inquiry can be developed, granted by a greater interdisciplinary approach to language matters which may consider code-switching contexts and non-elite multilingualism (see Balboni 1998: 12ff.) as the outcomes of an increased international mobility which has made people – and their use of the languages – complex and multilingual. In other words, as Cruz-Ferreira argues, "multilingualism has nothing to do with particular languages, because languages cannot be multilingual. People can" (Cruz-Ferreira 2010: 1). This idea finds English as a medium of national and international lives although they can be extremely varied and more or less specialized. It is like a tree with an increasing number of branches; and the branches are the domains in which English is becoming an essential requirement of a global and "liquid" society (Bauman 2000) which still "uses the language as one of its codes" (Bloomfield 1935: 21).

As regards English, a number of possible uses can be observed in science, commerce, entertainment, tourism, and in a lot of professional environments together with higher education sectors working as the main actors of language learning all around the world. A powerful example in this regard can be found in a new application of words like "evolution",

"ecology", and "life of languages", which may still play an important role in defining variation within languages, shedding new light on the modern conditioning factors of such changes. According to such a perspective, the ecology of language as described by Haugen in the seventies, may be again a possible tool for the interpretation of the multilingual society we live in. He stated:

> Language exists only in the minds of its users, and it only functions in relating these users to one another and to nature, i.e. their social and natural environment, parts of its ecology is therefore psychological: its interaction with other languages in the minds of bi- and multilingual speaker. Another part of its ecology is sociological: its interaction with the society in which it functions as a medium of communication. The ecology of a language is determined primarily by the people who learn it, use it, and transmit to others (Haugen 2001: 58, italics added).

Now, the question is: how can such ecology be applied to the languages spoken in the global village? And what contribution does it give to the multilingual turn? We think it works as the "host" thanks to which the language "species" develop. As Mufwene points out:

> Parasitic species are a fairly adequate analog chiefly because a language does not exist without speakers, just like parasites do not exist without hosts. The life of a language is, to borrow from Brown (1995: 91), "closely tied to the distribution of its hosts, which provide many of the essential environmental conditions necessary to its survival and reproduction". Many of the ecological factors that affect a language are not physical features of its speakers but features of other parasitic systems that are hosted by the same individuals, such as culture – which brings along notions such as status, gender, and power – and other language varieties (Mufwene 2001: 152).

The metaphor of the parasitic species improves rather than diminish the concept of variation in the "biological life" of languages. Being English the focus of this study, it is impossible to trace its rise and to outline the kind of spread it has in the multilingual puzzle without mentioning the multiple uses, the psychological and sociological conditioning factors which affect the growing demand for it in the world. Its uniqueness lies in the magical interplay between such "hosts" which vary in the way of learning, using and transmitting it in the new international background. This being so, the

study of the spread of English needs to work simultaneously on at least four different levels:

- the use of individuals
- the use of language communities
- the use of English in family bilingualism
- the use of English for specific purposes and professional ones.

The impossible reduction of a language to a sequence of rules makes language itself a concrete manifestation of our actual experience of difference. Anyway, what seems to be questionable of the ecological model of languages is their development through a linear pattern which would impede meaningful changes. In fact, for a multilingual speaker, it is all a matter of interdependence. According to Herdina – Jessner (2000):

> If the rate of growth or the rate of attrition of one language system is dependent on the development or behavior of other language systems used by the multilingual speaker – and /or other interdependent factors – then in does not make sense to look at language acquisition or language growth in terms of isolated language development. […] Instead of looking at the development of individual language systems in isolation, it may make more sense to look at the overall system of languages commanded simultaneously by the multilingual individual and then try to determine the patterns of convergence and divergence of the multilingual system, rather than see the multilingual system as a mere accumulation of the effects of concatenated of sequential individual systems (Herdina – Jessner 2000: 92).

2. English against a multilingual world?

In 2003 House was wondering if it were possible to think of English as an obstacle to multilingualism. More specifically, her question was "English as a lingua franca: a threat to multilingualism?"

Given the widespread use of English all around the world, the myth of monolingualism is surely put into question. Many people use English differently (at least a billion people worldwide) and this recalls Kachru's and McArthur's models of the "world Englishes" spoken today. But the doubt House was referring to, moved from the distinction between "languages of communication" and "languages of identification", drawing on the

findings of some research projects carried out at the University of Hamburg ten years ago.

Despite the success of non-native speakers in using ELF (English as a lingua franca), it still works on the basis of a shared knowledge of meanings which cannot be part of a linguistically determined identity. Effectively, in House's words, such identity:

> needs not be unitary and fixed, but can be multi-faceted, non-unitary and contradictory (Norton 2000), when an individual speaks more than one language. Because EFL is not a national language but a mere tool bereft of collective cultural capital, it is a language usable neither for identity marking, nor for a positive ("integrative") disposition towards an L2 group, nor for a desire to become similar to valued members of this L2 group – simply because there is no definable group of EFL speakers. […] Paradoxically as this may seem, the very spread of EFL may stimulate members of minority languages to insist on their own local languages for emotional binding to their own culture, history, and tradition, and there is, indeed, a strong countercurrent to the spread of EFL in that local varieties and cultural practices are often strengthened (House 2003: 560-561).

Put in another way, the unconditioned recognition of a privileged status of English does not solve the problem of communication in all the multilingual domains, which call necessarily for hybridity and not for a new imperialism of languages.

Consequently, the multiple relationships between multilingualism and a new lingua franca need to be reexamined, asking:

- how to consider multilingualism a resource *thanks* to the global rise of the English language?
- how to regulate the transfer?
- how to make multilingual education a meaningful participation tool of democracy?

We may not find all the answers, but, as Robert Phillipson noted, the rhetoric of egalitarian multilingualism is strictly intertwined with concerns of linguistic hierarchisation and marginalization. The study of linguistic imperialism moves from the penetration of the strongest languages in many different countries and several domains of social life. But the pace of this breach is faster and faster today and, from the theoretical foundations of

linguistic imperialism, now it is important to ask how English as a *lingua franca* can or cannot become a *lingua frankensteinia* in many parts of the world[2]. As Mohanty notes in the interesting "Multilingual Education: a Bridge too Far?":

> Phillipson demonstrates that many language-in-education issues in Europe have similarities with postcolonial dilemmas. He cautions against false arguments for English and merely treating English as a lingua franca when it actually functions as a lingua frankensteinia in many parts of the world. He does not deny the role of English in an egalitarian multilingual framework, but pleads for careful analysis of how to counterbalance its adverse and subtractive effects on linguistic diversity, multilingualism and MLE (Mohanty 2009: 8).

Despite the international space gained by English, the empirical studies of its variations around the world show a blurred map of diversity related to the use of it as a foreign/second language. Hence, while the introduction of English in Nigeria is a matter of fact today, the language conditions of countries like Russia, or the Maghreb may be interesting cases in point.

3. The domestication of English? The "cases" of Russia and the Maghreb

English is gaining ground in many countries all over the world. It is a passport for better careers and it works as a mediator between millions of speakers who look at the "language of Albion" as a democratic tool of independence. But musing on the status of English as an international language in areas such as Russia and the Maghreb should deal with the following areas, at least:

- the implications of language education
- language contacts
- the influence of English in terms of functions in the social and public domains

The study of English outside its traditional contexts asks for something more than a mere account of equivalences, assuming that the variables of ESL

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[2]   For further discussion of linguistic imperialism see also Phillipson (1992 and 2009).

and EFL are too different from the English spoken as a first language to be easily reduced and summed up. As Eddy notes:

> The foundation for the study of English in non-native contexts was laid by the "social-realistic" or functionally oriented approaches to language study of J.R. Firth (1935) and other scholars, such as Labov (e.g. 1963, 1966, 1972, 1974). These studies emphasize the connection between language and society, linguistic pluralism and diversity (Eddy 2008: 6).

What Eddy was referring to in the interesting dissertation about the spread of English in Russian contexts, moved from the socio-political conditions of England, America and Russia after the fall of the Iron Curtain in the late 1980s. Since then, a function-oriented approach to linguistic exchanges, occurred between English and Russia in the new "contexts of situation" – to quote Firth –, has been applied. Even without a colonial past, the level of polyglossia for Russian speakers is now potentially higher especially in relation to Russia's contacts with a lot of Eastern countries. According to Kirkpatrick – Sussex:

> In the past, in the Soviet Union and post-Communist Russia, the traditions of communicating with Asian countries had relied on interpreting and translation between Russian and the target language. Nowadays English has replaced this language-to-language channel by functioning as an intermediary lingua franca. English language pedagogy, which in the past had concentrated on communicating Russian culture to English speakers, and Anglophone culture to Russians, now needs to be recast in terms of multiple Asian cultures, languages and norms […] (Kirkpatrick – Sussex 2012: 7).

However, the extent of the relationship between English and Russian is not a simple one; above all the possible constraints, let us think about the transliteration of Roman letters into the Cyrillic alphabet and some culture-bound differences between the two countries which sound relevant from a linguistic point of view too. Possible questions are then: can we understand different cultures through the use of their key words? Or, in other words, how is lexicon affected by the core values of a country, and what does it tell us about them? Anna Wierzbicka's 1997 study offers a possible answer. Musing on polysemy, allolexy and "valency options", Wierzbicka proposes an interesting linguistic analysis of language matters and their relationship

to cultures, widening the perspective by Sapir according to which language is a symbolic guide to culture. She focused her attention on English, Russian, Polish, German, and Japanese (so languages very different from each other), musing on key concepts across cultures, such "friendship", "freedom", "homeland and fatherland" above all. What she found out is an interesting comparison of meanings based on a Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM). She wrote:

> the theory assumed in this book posits the existence not only of an innate and universal 'lexicon of human thoughts' but also of an innate and universal 'syntax of human thoughts'. Taken together, these two hypotheses amount to positing something that can be called 'a language of thought', or, as I called it in the title of my 1980 book 'Lingua Mentalis'. It is this 'lingua mentalis' which is being proposed, and tested, as a practical metalanguage (NSM) for the description and comparison of meanings (Wierzbicka 1997: 28).

Despite the rich diversity between English and Russian, for example, she makes an interesting comparison between Russian *svoboda* and English *freedom*, showing how the two words might be seen at a first glance as corresponding, while they embody different perspectives on human life[3].

The contact between the two languages necessarily implies debates on word formation and the study of foreign lexical items which refer to a wide range of fields (from trade to technology, from politics to science, from literature to entertainment.) If from the 1920s to the 1940s, Russia registered two groups of loan words, both "lexemes, associated with new concepts, and loan words which replaced already existing Russian lexical items" (Eddy 2008: 83), in the 1950s foreign words were rejected as a result of World War II and the Cold War. Then the history of English/Russian relationships went on with much language resistance and developments concerning the use of a foreign language instead of Russian, which, since the 1960s, had tried to hold a stronger position in higher education and international communication. However, "since perestroika in the 1980s, the significance of Russian as an intra-national and inter-national language has dropped significantly" (Eddy 2008: 93). As a consequence, since the twentieth century, English has had the most significant impact on the Russian linguistic system on different levels: "lexicon, stylistics, semantics, pragmatics, phonology, morphology, graphics, and punctuation". (Rivlina 2005, quoted by Eddy 2008: 93).

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3   For further references on this topic see Wierzbicka (1997: 129-143).

But what is interesting from a linguistic point of view is that this relationship has also been a mutual one; that is why Podhajecka (2006) speaks about "Russianisms *in* English":

> there is some evidence that Russianisms were steadily transferred into the English vocabulary. As they appeared, in some cases extensively, in printed sources, lexicographers started recording them in dictionaries, which are now indispensable resources for reconstructing past language contacts (Podhajecka 2006: 123).

However, while the first Russian words were borrowed in the second half of the sixteenth century by "English merchants and ambassadors of Russia" (Podhajecka 2006: 124) and their number increased considerably in the nineteenth century, most loanwords were taken into English in the twentieth century, as we may guess from the diversification of Russian-American contacts. Anyway "characteristically, towards the end of the century the interest in Russian words decreases. The 1980s brought two keywords of the decade, *perestroika* and *glasnost*, but no other borrowings have become clearly recognizable since". (Podhajecka, 2006: 124). Podhajecka's researches are very stimulating, maybe because the papers on Russianisms are very scarce and mostly dealing with single aspects of borrowing and calquing. For this reason it is worth mentioning her methodology of research and some of her findings about Russianisms. She writes:

> My research material consists of the largest monolingual dictionaries of English. For British English, I took into account Samuel Johnson's Dictionary of the English Language (1755) and the OED2. I also consulted three volumes of the Oxford English Dictionary Additions (1993–97 henceforth the OEDA) for some recent vocabulary. As regards American English, I examined the Century Dictionary (1889–91 edition and Supplement) and three consecutive editions of Webster's New International Dictionary: 1913 (1909 edition and Addenda), 1953 (1934 edition and Addenda) and 2000 (1961 edition and Addenda); henceforth, Webster's 1, Webster's 2 and Webster's 3, respectively. Three volumes of the Barnhart Dictionary of New Words (1973, 1980, 1990, henceforth the BDNW) complement the analysis of American dictionaries. […]. From the above-mentioned dictionaries, some of which are now available in the electronic form and are thus easily searchable (the dictionaries that had to be literally 'read' page by page were Webster's 2, the OEDA and the BDNW), I excerpted headwords

either etymologised as Russianisms (or Sovietisms) or defined in relation to Russia (or the Soviet Union). Next, I compared the lists of words and excluded calques (e.g., five-year plan), loanblends (e.g., refusenik or Gorbymania) and semantic borrowings (e.g., pioneer). Further criteria allowed me to leave out, for instance, specific technical terms (e.g., achtaragdite or uvarovite), toponyms (e.g., Kursk or Scherbakov) and proper nouns in the attributive position (e.g., Molotov cocktail or Stanislavsky technique). Then, to revise the etymologies of the remaining words, I worked with primary and secondary sources in English and Russian, of which the latter included Dal''s (1880–82) and Vasmer's (1986) dictionaries. At this stage, indirect borrowings (e.g., Kremlin or tsarina) and etymologically irrelevant lexical items (e.g., britska or mazurka) were dropped. Finally, problematic words, for which no clear evidence was found, were taken at face value; in other words, their cultural identity was treated as a predominant factor. Cosmonaut, perceived here as a borrowing of Russ. kosmonavt, is perhaps the most conspicuous case. It has to be kept in mind, however, that every etymology presupposes a varying margin of error (Liberman 2005: 239 quoted by Podhajecka 2006: 125).

As we can see from the Russian example, the language matter is full of paradoxes and there are different levels of the concept of domestication of English around the world. That is because more and more countries face the challenge of new complex language issues associated with English as a foreign language or English as a lingua franca. This is also evident because these two concepts are intrinsically different. The range of multilingualism depends on the extent of the language contact, the mastery of the language, and the role played by language education.

Another interesting case is the Maghreb, which has a remarkable geopolitical situation that affects its process towards multilingualism. In such cases, the implications for language policy and planning depends on a wide range of factors such as the ones Ennaji points out referring specifically to Morocco, "bearing in mind the language-power relation, factors like ethnicity, cultural identity, education, literacy, gender, social stratification, and Westernisation intermingle in the everyday life and transactions of Moroccans" (Ennaji 2005: 6). About the spread of English in Morocco Ennaji adds:

> Most educated people like English and would like to see their children learn it. Progressive and conservative parties advocate the teaching

of English, which has non colonial overtones. Most intellectuals favour English because they see it as the language of international communication, technology, and economic exchanges. […] English is regarded by Moroccan students as being more flexible than French. […] Many Moroccan students tend to turn to English not only because they find it easier to learn, but also because it is an important international language. Additionally, they are less socially penalized when they make mistakes in English than in French (Ennaji 2005: 196).

Aitsiselmi and Marley maintain that:

As in most of the world today, English is increasingly powerful in a range of domains even in North Africa, where something about the old set of the indigenous languages is changing and, as Aitsiselmi and Marley note – "the production in Berber is gaining a higher profile both in the Maghreb and internationally" (Aitsiselmi – Marley 2008: 187).

The desire for a hybrid space between Arabic and French has worked as an identity quest which can be also linguistically expressed. Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Mauritania and parts of the Western Saharan countries are still coping with the difficult matter of making multilingual education a national priority and a tool of democracy. In fact, as Mortimer (2001) notes:

Situated between East and West, drawing upon Africa, Europe, and Middle East, the Maghreb as a geographical and cultural entity is capable of privileging cultural pluralism and multilingualism. Writers such as Abdelkébir Khatibi in Morocco, Abdelwahab Meddeb in Tunisia, and Mouloud Mammeri in Algeria have spoken for plurality of language and culture, an ideological perspective that sees beyond territorial boundaries (Mortimer 2001: 5).

Since the 1960s, the independence of the Maghrebian countries opened up new opportunities and contacts with international markets, and the debate about foreign language learning started from the presumed failure of Arabic in scientific and technological sectors. The increasing introduction of English in language curricula and the new training of professionals involved in the process, are still trying to answer the global market's needs even against the resistance from those who still believe in the uniqueness of Arabic and Muslim culture. Indeed, while politicians such as the Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika asked for multilingualism and cultural plurality,

some bloggers from the same regions still wonder about mastering foreign languages writing sentences like these: "Bilingualism is a calamity. Why isn't China teaching its kids a foreign language", or "In the Sadiki school, or Sadiki education, pupils used to start learning French very early since primary school, just like today. Therefore, the problem does not lie in the timing of learning a foreign language, but rather in its methodology, the efficiency of teachers, and the conviction of students about the importance of languages"[4].

As a consequence, musing on foreign languages in the Maghreb, and especially on teaching English as a counterpart of French dominance, is seen, as Gordon states, "potentially neo-colonialist" (Gordon 1978: 172 quoted by Benrabah 2007: 28) and it builds a cultural dilemma which deals with the overcrowding of the classes (an average of 40 students and even 50 in Morocco) and with the introduction of English as a school subject since the third year of primary school.

Effectively, francophonie was part of a global strategy which had a linguistic purpose together with a political one; but in 1999 President Bouteflika pointed out how multilingualism was ready to work as the modernizing engine which Algeria needed. He said:

> Let it be known that Algeria is part of the world and must adapt to it and Arabic is the national and official language. This being said, let it be known that an uninhibited opening up to other international languages – at least those used in the United Nations – does not constitute perjury. […] To move forward, one must break taboos. This is the price we have to pay to modernize our identity. Chauvinism and withdrawal are over. They are destructive[5].

What can we conclude from this? Certainly that each language identity is an unfixed entity. However, Suleiman claims that

> they are always constructed. And they are always contextualized. In short they are in a state of evolving betweenness. The problem arises when we try to eliminate difference or overstate sameness in defining identities (Suleiman 2006: 24).

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[4]   These are anonymous comments taken from the blog *Zawaya. A Service of Maghrebia* (http: //zawaya.magharebia.com/old_zawaya/en_GB/zawaya/opinion/302.html (accessed: June 24, 2014).

[5]   This excerpt of a televised speech by Bouteflika, released in 1999 and reported by the newspaper *El Watan*, is quoted by Kaplan – Baldauf, Jr (2007: 10).

This hybrid nature of the greatest postcolonial cultures has been represented by the Francophone literature of French Africa and by the Anglophone bilingualism of the Indian Subcontinent. Hence, the domestication of English in the Maghreb is still something new if compared to the professional standards which English has already obtained in other parts of the world. It means to further the competitiveness of teachers, students and institutions putting Arabic at the top, preserving the value of French, but promoting the spread of English too.

This is what happens in Tunisia, according to Mohamed-Salah Omri:

> In Tunisia, English was initially taught as a third language at a late age in secondary education and at university level. It was taught as a language of culture with focus on American and British history and literatures. […] Changes occurred recently, reflecting local and global developments. Linking the teaching of English to the needs of the country and moving away from the curriculum outlined earlier has become policy. English is called upon to serve a "function rather than cultural" aim. […] This adjustment occurs within the recognition that a wider range of English literatures perhaps closer to students' interests from outside Britain and the United States has become widely available. In recent years English has been making serious headway at the expense of French at the secondary and primary levels of education. The second language in Tunisia remains, however, French. It still wields power and influence in business and politics and in cultural turn. Yet, English is now firmly a voice in the polyphony of languages in the Maghreb (Omri 2006: 56).

4. Concluding remarks

Despite the rising educational resources fostered by the multilingual "turn", it involves the school dimension but implies the widening of the survey, from a language-restricted focus to the anthropological, biological and social dimension of international communication. This study suggests how concepts such as language use and identity need to be reviewed thanks to a multilingual paradigm which accounts, instead, for the irregularity of language systems.

Such achievement considers language both as a *regular* system ready for *regular* acquisition and as a sequence of *non-linear* interactive processes, which have much in common with the dynamic and complex systems of chaos and complexity which are "open and import free energy from the

environment to reorganize themselves to increasingly higher orders of complexity. Finally, these complex, dynamic systems are nonlinear. This means that the effects resulting from a cause will not be proportional to the cause". (Larsen-Freeman 2002: 40). However, such "discrepancies" also lay the basis for interesting empirical data collection, for instance concerning communicative events and their meaning in multilingual contexts. The tools to be used in such cases look for meaning assessment and fall predominantly within the domains of multilingual corpus analysis and in studies of language learning and language use[6].

Indeed, the spread of English in international communication and education plays the language game of a new urgency, which needs new "strategies" rather than "programmes". These programmes are made up of language awareness and translation practice, mediation and cultural interplay which English is an indispensable actor of, tracing the direction for a global demand of multilingualism which enjoys a reasonable health and fair perspective for the future.

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[6]   In the same vein, see the following studies based on interesting data analysis: Schmidt – Wörner (2012) and Todeva – Cenoz (2009).

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